

Tuesday, May 11, 2004

State Health Officials offer tips on avoiding ticks

Warmer weather is bringing Hoosiers outdoors, which means they may encounter disease-carrying ticks. The Indiana State Department of Health advises Hoosiers to take precautions when they plan outdoor activities in order to avoid contact with ticks.

These tiny pests may carry Lyme Disease, Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, or Ehrlichiosis.

"Ticks become active as soon as the weather begins to warm up," said James Howell, D.V.M., veterinary epidemiologist at the State Department of Health.

Each year, Indiana has an average of 21 cases of Lyme Disease, 5 cases of Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, and 4 cases of Ehrlichiosis. Exposure to tick-borne illnesses is unnecessary, according to Howell, if people follow a few precautions.

"We know that in order to become ill, a person has to be bitten by an infected tick, and that means a tick must be able to reach exposed skin," Howell said.

"A little care can prevent that

from happening."

Health officials recommend that if individuals plan to enter a grassy or wooded area where ticks are often present, the best way to prevent tick-transmitted diseases is to wear a long-sleeved shirt and light-colored pants, with the shirt tucked in at the waist and the pants tucked into socks. The use of repellents provides even more protection.



Howell says that insect repellents containing DEET can be sprayed on both skin and clothing to repel ticks and other insects. For individuals who expect to be exposed to

tick habitat for an extended time and desire additional protection, Howell says that there are products containing permethrin that can be used on clothing. Permethrin is an insecticide that kills ticks and other insects on contact.

Howell recommends that after leaving a grassy or wooded area, individuals should check for ticks on clothing and skin.

"If a tick is attached to your skin, it can

be removed with either tweezers or forceps by grasping the tick as close to the skin as possible," Howell said. "Ticks should not be removed with your bare fingers, but if tweezers or forceps are not available, you can use tissue paper or a paper towel to prevent the passing of any possible infection."

The symptoms of Lyme Disease include a persistent, slowly expanding blotchy red rash that is paler at the center than at the edges.

Other symptoms are joint pain or swelling, especially in the knees; fatigue; difficulty in concentrating; headache; stiff neck or weakness of the facial muscles; dizziness; and an irregular heartbeat.

The symptoms of Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever and Ehrlichiosis are similar. They include a moderate-to-high fever, coupled with fatigue, muscle aches and pains, severe headaches, and chills.

A rash also develops, which usually first appears on the arms, legs, palms of the hand and soles of the feet before spreading to other parts of the body.

If these diseases are diagnosed promptly, all three of them can be successfully treated by a physician.

For more information, visit the new [Lyme Disease](#) section of the State Department of Health's Web site.

Osteoporosis prevention targeted in May with free screenings

Photo by Dan Axler

May is National Osteoporosis Awareness Month. During this month, including National Women's Week (May 9 – 15), the State Department of Health's Office of Women's Health is reaching out to educate Hoosier women on osteoporosis prevention.

Free screenings will be available throughout the state.

"We try really hard to reach out to as many women as possible throughout the year, but especially during the month of May," said Andrea Frye, State Department of



Deb Eldridge, right, with the Indiana Osteoporosis Prevention Initiative performs an osteoporosis screening that measures the bone density of the heel.

Health's [Indiana Osteoporosis Prevention Initiative](#) program director. "We want to provide women with the tools to help prevent osteoporosis," she said.

According to Frye, osteoporosis is a disease that is characterized by thinning bones and bone fragility that may lead to fractures of the spine, hip and wrist.

"Osteoporosis is a silent disease, so there are no warning signs," said Frye. "However, risk factors could

Employees encouraged to be more active this summer

Leave your car keys at home and jump on your bicycle for "Ride Your Bike to Work Day," May 21.

The State Department of Health will join other state agencies in forming teams for this campaign.

"We are building awareness that you can bike to work," said Joni Albright, Special Projects director. "Bike to Work Day promotes individual health by increasing physical activity. This is an opportunity to support state employees who are trying to make healthy lifestyle choices."

After riding to work, participants will sign-in at the Government Place Park-n-Ride Corral, located between the two Government Center buildings. Secured bicycle parking will be provided in this area for a small fee. The team with the most participants will win a trophy.

Matt Kaag, Epidemiology, plans to ride his bike to work on May 21, just as he does many times throughout the year.

"I enjoy riding my bike to work," said Kaag. "It's a very nice way to start the day."

Kaag says that he also enjoys the exercise benefits. His 11-mile, one-way ride usually takes 50 minutes, not too

much longer than his drive and walk from the parking lot. He uses the Monon Trail for a majority of the ride, making the route more direct than his driving route.

"It's a pretty easy ride," he said adding that he can ride up to speeds of 20-miles per hour on a good day.

Kaag prefers to ride in dry weather conditions, with a temperature of at least 55 degrees.

He locks his bike in a secured room in the State Department of Health located off of the alley north of the building, and uses the lockers in the locker room. Showers are also available in the room.

While Kaag has been riding bike in cities for most of his life, and navigates the streets well, he does suggest that bikers arrive in downtown before rush hour.

"It's best to leave home early and try to be downtown by 7 a.m. because traffic will get worse after that time."

Those interested in joining the State Department of Health's Bike to Work team, can sign-up at the 2 North Meridian Street building lobby. For more information, contact Albright at jalbrigh@isdh.state.in.us.

Photo by Dan Axler



Matt Kaag

Walking, running program offered over lunch hour

Indiana State Department of Health employees are invited to join other state employees in an employee walking and running program along the canal May 11 through June 17, 2004. Sign-up is not required. The program offers three options:

♦**Beginner Walking Program** Meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays outside of the Government Center North cafeteria entrance along the canal at noon and will walk until 12:30 p.m.

♦**Intermediate Walking Program** Meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays outside the Government Center North cafeteria entrance at 11:15 a.m. and will walk until noon.

♦**Beginner Running Program** Meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays outside of the Government Center North cafeteria entrance, along the canal at 11 a.m. and will run until 11:30 a.m. It will cover approximately three miles at a 10-minute-per-mile pace.

Runners and walkers will participate at their own risk and should consult with a physician if they have any concerns prior to starting an exercise program.

State Department of Health recognizes nurses during national week

"Nurses: Your Voice, Your Health, Your Life," is the theme of this year's National Nurses Week May 6-12.

The State Department of Health has many nurses on staff, and all have responsibilities not traditionally thought of as the typical nurse's job of patient care, said Kathy Weaver, R.N., Office of Policy.

"We have nurses as program directors, in administrative roles, as policy setters, and in surveying/regulatory roles," said Weaver. "We have R.N. after our name, have our nursing license, but the typical State Department of Health employee may not be able to tell we are nurses by our jobs."

Weaver said that like herself, most nurses at the State Department of Health probably have hospital experience behind them.

"In a hospital, we always had to be one step ahead of our patients' needs, had to have good observation skills and good planning skills, and we had to be able to multi-task," she said.

And it's those skills, she said, that benefit this agency.

"For public health and ISDH, we try to anticipate the upcoming needs. We are always thinking about the next outbreak that may happen, or plan that needs developing, or the survey that needs completing, and how we can prepare for action," said Weaver. "Those skills learned in nursing benefit the agency now. Even though we're not giving shots, we use planning and multi-tasking skills everyday and we probably just don't think about them as nursing skills."

To Marjorie Clegg, R.N., Long Term Care surveyor, her work is different than

her 15 years of hospital work. "I was on the other side of the coin prior to this

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The Indiana State Department of Health Express is a biweekly publication for ISDH employees and stakeholders. Words in blue are links that you can access directly if you read the Express on-line. To submit news items, call (317) 234-2817 or send information to: ISDH Express, Office of Public Affairs, 2 N. Meridian St., Section 6G, Indianapolis, IN 46204-3003. Inquiries should be directed to:

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Race for the Cure

April 24, 2004



Nearly 100 Indiana State Department of Health employees joined the fight against breast cancer Saturday, April 24 at the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure. Above, team members pose with Lt. Governor Kathy Davis, (far right) before heading to the start line. Right, breast cancer survivor Martha Bonds, Minority Health, wears the pink boa given to survivors.



Above, after finishing the race with First Lady Maggie Kernan, several team members gather for a photograph. Left, Lt. Governor Kathy Davis meets Team ISDH Captain Carol Case, Breast and Cervical Cancer, and her granddaughter Kelsey.

SCREENINGS: Short, painless and non-invasive

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alert a woman to her potential for needing to be tested.”

The non-invasive, painless osteoporosis screening uses an ultrasound of the heel, and takes 10 - 15 seconds. While screenings are offered to women over 18, women over the age of 40 are at higher risk than those women who are under 40. Frye stresses, though, that there is a value in testing all women.

“The heel bone is a good-sized bone and similar to the hip bone, which is one that is often fractured,” said Frye.

Results are available immediately and participants are counseled about them one-on-one.

During the consultation part of the screening, the bone density results are discussed, as well as risk factors such as a family history of osteoporosis. Frye explained that other important risk factors include having a small body frame, smoking, menopausal status, low calcium diet, having had a previous fracture, and physical activity levels.

“Prevention is the most important aspect of osteoporosis,” said Frye. “Eighty percent of women don’t get enough calcium, which is one main contributor to developing a bone disease like osteoporosis. Women aren’t getting what they need to maintain the strength of their bones.”

Women ages 19-50 should consume 1,000 milligrams of calcium per day and women ages 50 and higher should consume 1,200-1,500 milligrams of calcium per day, said Frye. In comparison, she said, “One eight-ounce glass of milk contains 300 milligrams.”

In May 2003, between 1,800 - 2,000 Hoosier women were screened by the State Department of Health. A total of 9,100 women were screened in 2003.

ISDH nurses have variety of responsibilities

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job,” she said. “I saw the residents come in from the nursing home.”

As a surveyor, Clegg visits between 25-30 nursing homes per year to make sure federal and state regulations are met. The unannounced survey visit, which could take five to seven days, includes a review of everything from patient rooms, administering of medication, clinical records, employee records, environment, patient care, food preparation and water temperatures. Clegg and her team members also meet with a select group of residents and hear any complaints or concerns.

Although Clegg isn’t allowed to intervene with patients as she did as a hospital nurse, she does find the work just as rewarding.

“I am there for the residents,” she said.

As a supervisor of Long Term Care field supervisors, Kim Rhoades agrees that nurses play a key role in nursing home surveying.

“Having nurses performing the surveys

is very important,” said Rhoades. “A lot of the issues they are looking at in the nursing homes are nursing issues. Nurses already know patient care, medication administration, and infection control. To survey, nurses have to learn food sanitation, accounting for a review of resident funds, and report writing. Our surveyors have a lot of responsibility, and they have to have a lot of knowledge that typically is not required of most registered nurses.”

Weaver said that the agency nurses will lunch together during National Nurses Week and discuss nursing trends and “hot topics.”

The agency has asked Governor Joseph Kernan to issue a proclamation to recognize all community nurses on May 12, the birthday of nursing pioneer Florence Nightingale.

“The nursing mission is service-oriented,” said Weaver. “We continue to fulfill our mission by serving this agency and public health in general.”

HIPAA Corner

As the health care industry evolves in compliance with the new federal HIPAA standards, concern about the level of privacy and security of individually identifiable health information has increased.

ISDH workforce members have inquired about additional measures that can be implemented to minimize the risk of security or privacy breaches. One area of concern deals with disclosures of confidential health information via e-mail. ISDH programs that are not covered by HIPAA may at times find it necessary or important to exchange via e-mail confidential health information with outside entities that are covered by HIPAA. Many of these covered entities may be concerned whether ISDH programs — covered or not — have safeguards in place in case such an e-mail is inadvertently sent to an incorrect e-mail address.

To help address this issue, the Office of HIPAA Compliance would like to make an e-mail disclaimer available to all ISDH workforce members. We are suggesting this language to you in the event that you should transfer individually identifiable health information that should remain confidential. This disclaimer has already been provided to all ISDH programs covered by HIPAA to be utilized as an additional safeguard to prevent inadvertent disclosures of confidential health information. This disclaimer may be attached to your electronic signatures in Groupwise and reads as follows: *“This message and any attachments may be confidential. If you are not the intended recipient, please (1) notify me immediately; (2) do not forward the message or attachment; (3) do not print the message or attachment; and (4) erase the message and attachment from your system.”*

For any questions or concerns relative to HIPAA, please feel free to contact the Office of HIPAA Compliance.

— Contributed by Lisa Mani,
ISDH Privacy Coordinator